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April 6, 2009

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"In today's tough economic times, it is especially important that North Mississippians know where their taxpayer dollars are going, and that they are being used wisely for projects that will help promote economic development and strengthen communities in the First Congressional District," said Congressman Childers. "As always, I am committed to bringing taxpayer dollars back to North Mississippi for local investment, and I will continue to fight for worthy projects that will benefit the district."

All projects were selected for meeting at least one of the following new key criteria set by Congressman Childers:

- Cost-Effective ("bang for the buck"): uses limited funds efficiently to produce greater impact on quality of life or economic development in the community.
- Job Creators: creates or attract jobs; will bolster the First District's competitive advantage in the global economy.
- Infrastructure: invests in the development of local communities through the enhancement of critical infrastructure in the region

New Oversight and Transparency Requirements for Earmark Requests:

Step 1: Members are Required to Post All Requests Online: During the 110th Congress, Congressman Childers posted earmark requests on his website to promote transparency and fiscal accountability. To offer more opportunity for public scrutiny of requests, all members of Congress are now required to post this on their websites at the time the request is made with the proposed recipient; the address of the recipient; the amount of the request; and an explanation of the request, including its purpose and why it is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds. (new as of January 2009)

Step 2: Certify No Financial Interest: At the time the request is made, the member of Congress must send the House Committee on Appropriations a letter identifying the earmark, the entity that will receive the funds and their address, what the earmark does, and a certification that neither the requesting member nor their spouse will benefit from it financially. The certification is available on the internet at least 48 hours prior to a floor vote on the bill. (new as of January 2007)

Step 3: Executive Review: The appropriate federal agency will be given 20 days to check that the proposed earmark is eligible for funding and meets the goals established by law for the program under which the request is made. (new as of March 2009)

Step 4: Early Public Disclosure of Subcommittee Decisions: Each spending bill must be accompanied by a list identifying each earmark that it includes and which member requested it. To increase the time available for public scrutiny of committee decisions, earmark disclosure tables will be made available to the public the same day as the House or Senate Subcommittee rather than the Full Committee reports their bill. (new as of January 2009)

Step 5: Capping Earmarks: Total funding for non-project based earmarks will be limited to 50% of the 2006 levels and no more than 1% of the total discretionary budget. (new as of January 2009)

Step 6: Votes: Members are able to offer floor amendments on earmarks under the rules of the House and Senate. Over 70 such votes were taken on individual earmarks in 2007 in the House.

Step 7: Competitive Process: The Executive Branch will be required to ensure that any earmarks directed to for-profit entities will be awarded through a competitive bidding process. (new as of March 2009)

Step 8: Rescissions: In the event that any ineligible projects are discovered after the earmark is signed into law, under the rescission process on the books, Congress can consider proposals by the President to rescind funding.

A comprehensive list of Congressman Childers' funding requests is available on the Congressman's online office under "On the Issues" at <http://www.childers.house.gov/>. These requests do not automatically become law. Because the amount of earmarks is reduced every year, non-selection does not necessarily mean that a project is unworthy or doesn't qualify for federal funding. Only a handful of Congressman's earmark requests will be included in the final legislation this year.

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